



Dear Park Neighbors, Visitors, and Other Interested Parties:

In recent months the National Park Service (NPS) has initiated a major planning effort for the park. We have begun work on a new long-range management plan for all of New River Gorge National River. We have also begun work on an implementation plan for the Nuttallburg site.

The existing *New River Gorge National River General Management Plan* (GMP) was completed in 1982. Much has changed in and around the park since then. It is now time to take a fresh look at how we envision the future of New River Gorge National River and identify the actions needed to accomplish that vision. Over the next 15 to 20 years the new GMP will provide the management framework for how the park's resources are to be managed and how visitors may experience the park.

Nuttallburg is a nationally significant historic resource that is the site of the former Nuttallburg Mine and town. Concurrent with completing the GMP, NPS will explore alternatives for management of the site's resources and for visitor use and experience. The Implementation Plan will identify the preservation actions that will be employed at the site, the interpretive stories to be told there, and the visitor use facilities to be provided, as funding becomes available.

Public participation is an essential aspect of the GMP planning process. The purpose of this newsletter is to:

- share information about the GMP planning process and schedule
- present information regarding the framework for planning at New River Gorge and at the Nuttallburg site
- inform you as to how you can participate in the planning process

Please take some time to help us plan for the future. As we move through the planning pro-

cess over the next year there will be a series of public meetings and open houses. Each will be conducted on three sequential days, in Hinton, Beckley, and Fayetteville. By attending you can share your thoughts on how we can provide the highest quality service to the visiting public, the park's neighbors, and other stakeholders while conserving the park's heritage and resources for generations to come. You will find meeting dates, times, and locations for the initial set of meetings on page four of this newsletter.

Thank you for your participation in planning for the future of New River Gorge National River.

Sincerely,

Calvin F. Hite
Superintendent
New River Gorge National River
Gauley River National Recreation Area
Bluestone National Scenic River

Background

New River Gorge National River was established by Congress in 1978. It encompasses a 55-mile corridor along the New River extending from the city of Hinton to Hawk's Nest State Park in Summers, Raleigh, and Fayette Counties, West Virginia. This stretch of the New River passes through New River Gorge, an area rich in cultural and natural history and in scenic and recreational opportunities. Currently the NPS administers about 52,192 of the 72,189 acres within the authorized boundary of the National River.

What is a General Management Plan?

A general management plan (GMP) identifies the overall direction for the future management of units of the National Park System. GMPs take a long-range, broad, conceptual view, answering the question, "What kind of place do we want this park to be?" They provide a framework for



managers to use in making decisions about such issues about how best to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed, and how people should access the park. All concepts, strategies, and actions in a GMP must be consistent with the reasons for the park's establishment – its purpose and significance. Federal legislation, such as the National Park Service Organic Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and NPS policies also direct what the plan can and cannot consider.

The New River Gorge National River GMP will describe the general path that NPS intends to follow in managing the park over the next 15 to 20 years. The plan will identify desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that would be appropriate for each part of the park and the strategies for achieving those conditions. It also will identify general locations where certain types of development would be appropriate, and other areas where it would not be appropriate. The GMP will not resolve all the issues facing the park, provide detailed facility designs and management actions, or guarantee funding. Specific questions regarding how desired conditions will be achieved will be answered in new or revised implementation plans that will be prepared after the GMP is completed.

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and NPS policy, the GMP will be combined with an Environmental Impact Statement. The *New River Gorge National River General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* will identify significant issues and concerns, present a reasonable range of management alternatives, and analyze the environmental consequences of each of the alternatives, and select the preferred alternative from among those considered.

New River Gorge National River

Park Purpose, Significance, and Fundamental and Other Resources and Values

At the beginning of the planning process it is important to reaffirm the park's purpose and significance and to identify its fundamental and other important resources and values. We do this to establish the framework within which we can evaluate proposed alternatives to ensure that they are consistent with the park's establishing legislation.

Draft Park Purpose

Park purpose statements clarify the specific reasons why New River Gorge National River was established.

The purposes of New River Gorge National River are to:

- conserve and enhance the free-flowing New River, its gorge, and the adjoining Appalachian Plateau, and their outstanding geologic and hydrologic features, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife communities, historic and archeological resources, cultural heritage, and scenic character
- provide public understanding and appreciation of the park's natural, cultural, and scenic resources and values

Draft Park Significance and Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

Park significance statements are statements of why, within a national, regional, and NPS systemwide context, New River Gorge National River's resources and values are important enough to warrant national park designation.

Park fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells or other attributes, including opportunities for visitor enjoyment that warrant primary consideration during planning and management because they are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance

Other important resources and values are those attributes that are important to park management and planning, although they are not related to the park's purpose and significance

The significance of New River Gorge National River and the related fundamental resources and values are as follows:

1. **Flowing water is the definitive creative force of the New River Gorge. The New River, one of the oldest rivers in the world, continues to sculpt the longest and deepest river gorge in the Appalachian Mountains.**

Fundamental Resources and Values

- A concentration of geologic features and processes that exemplify the geology of the Appalachian Plateau, including the exposure of over 1000 feet of sandstone and shale, house-sized boulders scattered from rim to river, plant and invertebrate fossils, and steep channel drop-offs
- The exposure of four seams of coal, considered among the best bituminous coal in the world; the smokeless New River coal fed the boilers of the nation's trains, factories, fleets and power plants, and its coke fueled the nation's iron furnaces

2. **The waters of the New River system contain a mosaic of hydrologic features and aquatic habitats, support a unique aquatic ecosystem, and nourish a riparian zone that supports rare plants, animals, and communities.**

Fundamental Resources and Values

- A surprising variety and density of riverine hydrologic features and processes unparalleled in the Eastern United States, including pools, backwaters, glides, runs, shoals, riffles, torrents, cascades, chutes, rapids and waterfalls
- A highly productive aquatic ecosystem that includes distinct assemblages of native fish (many found nowhere else), mussels, crayfish, and a broad array of other aquatic life, including rare amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals
- The riparian zone is the most biologically diverse part of the park, and contains globally rare communities and essential habitat for several rare species
- Clean water that supports healthy aquatic and riparian environments

3. **New River Gorge National River lies at the core of a globally significant forest, contains the most diverse flora of any river gorge in central and southern Appalachia, and provides essential habitat for endangered mammals and rare birds and amphibians.**

Fundamental Resources and Values

- Rare expanse of unfragmented and varied forest types
- Large mosaic of habitats, from continuous forest, cliff and rimrock habitats, forest seeps and wetlands, and mature bottomland forests, to abandoned mine portals, providing a refuge for rare species, including bats, amphibians, and the Allegheny woodrat
- Abundant and diverse breeding populations of birds that spend part of their lives in the tropics but depend upon the unfragmented forests here for breeding, especially wood warblers, vireos, and thrushes
- Forty identified plant communities containing at least 1342 species and 54 rare plants
- Clean air



New River Gorge viewed from Diamond Point



Dunloup Creek Falls



Riparian area along the New River above Sandstone Falls



View of the park's forest expansive



Rare Cerulean Warbler that breeds in the park's forest

Park Purpose, Significance, and Fundamental and Other Resources and Values (continued)

4. **New River Gorge National River contains a large, outstanding and representative group of historic places that testify to the experiences of those diverse people who settled and developed this part of Appalachia between the 19th and mid-20th centuries.**

Fundamental Resources and Values

- Rare historic colliery structures and coke ovens of unmatched integrity, such as at Nuttallburg and Kaymoor, and the historic structures and ruins associated with more than 50 company owned towns
- Railroad depots, rail yards, rail grades, steel and timber trestle bridges, railroad equipment, archeological sites and associated towns, like Thurmond, developed to support the railroad
- Rare surviving examples of subsistence farms, like Trump Lily and Richmond Hamilton
- Stories of the area's cultural heritage, and the documentation and artifacts that support them

Other Important Resources and Values

- The history and archeology associated with the park's lumbering industry, Civilian Conservation Corps-era state parks, and prehistoric peoples
- The cultural values and traditional knowledge of the people who have lived in and used the natural and cultural resources in and around the gorge since the 18th century

5. **Broad views of unbroken forest, steep gorge walls, and a river both tranquil and turbulent are punctuated by pastoral landscapes and industrial ruins to produce dramatic and vivid views from the river, along trails and rural roads, and from rocky overlooks.**

Fundamental Resources and Values

- Panoramic views of the valleys and gorge of the New River as it cuts through the Appalachian Plateau
- Cultural landscapes that reflect settlement and industry influenced by a rugged and isolated setting
- Natural visibility, both in daytime and at night

6. **New River Gorge National River affords exceptional opportunities for exploration, adventure, discovery, solitude and community.**

Fundamental Resources and Values

- The tranquil setting characterized by a largely natural soundscape and night skies generally free of artificial light
- The topography, combination of impressive white water and tranquil pools, continuous expanse of exposed rock walls, and the diverse aquatic and terrestrial wildlife



Trump Lily Farm



Thurmond Bank near
Thurmond Depot



Paddling at dusk on the New
River above Sandstone Falls

A Concurrent Planning Effort at New River Gorge National River

NUTTALLBURG IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

While working on the General Management Plan (GMP), the National Park Service is also preparing an Implementation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Nuttallburg site, a nationally significant cultural resource associated with the coal mining history of the New River Gorge. An Implementation Plan is a document that is used by NPS to determine what improvements are needed in order to accommodate visitors, with appropriate facilities and services, and to enable them to appreciate and understand the significance of resources within this smaller area of the park.

The Nuttallburg Mine Complex was originally developed by John Nuttall in 1873, but was acquired in the 1920s by the Fordson Coal Company, as part of Henry Ford's efforts to vertically integrate the automobile production process at his innovative River Rouge Plant at Dearborn Michigan. The major remaining

structures at Nuttallburg date from the Ford era and include a headhouse, conveyor, and tipple that, although deteriorated by time and the weather, remain essentially intact. The site is significant for these reasons – indeed is unique nationally – and has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Acquired by NPS in 1998, Nuttallburg today is overgrown, difficult to reach, and has no interpretive program. In preparation for the Implementation Plan, NPS has completed a Historic Structures Report to define improvements necessary to stabilize this resource and will be undertaking repairs to enable better access to this site during the initial rehabilitation work, which will take place this spring. The Implementation Plan offers an opportunity to expand the interpretation of the industrial heritage of the New River, to offer new

experiences for visitors, and to coordinate these efforts with the larger GMP effort.



Nuttall Mine Coal Conveyor and Tipple (c.1927)



**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

New River Gorge National River
P.O. Box 246
Glen Jean, WV 25846

**New River Gorge National River General
Management Plan and Nuttallburg
Implementation Plan**

Who is on the Planning Team?

The Planning Team consists of the Park Superintendent, park staff, and technical specialists from the National Park Service's Northeast Regional Office. Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, and ICON architecture, inc. are private contractors that are assisting the National Park Service with the planning process. The Park Superintendent and the Director of the Northeast Region of the National Park Service will be the decision-makers in the planning effort. The Planning Team will coordinate with appropriate state, federal, and local agencies.

Public Meetings

The National Park Service has scheduled the first public meetings to begin the new General Management Plan for New River Gorge National River!

Tuesday, January 24th, 2006 from 5 – 6:30 PM

Memorial Building Auditorium
97 Park Avenue
(corner of Park Avenue & James Street)
Hinton, West Virginia

Wednesday, January 25th, 2006 from 3 – 5 PM

Tamarack Conference Center
One Tamarack Park (on Exit 45, Interstate 77)
Beckley, West Virginia

Thursday, January 26th, 2006 from 7 – 9 PM

Lafayette Post 149, American Legion Hall
205 West Maple Street
Fayetteville, West Virginia

**New River Gorge National River
General Management Plan and Nuttallburg Implementation Plan
Newsletter 1, January 2006**

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



How to be Involved:

The National Park Service appreciates your comments on the GMP planning process. We ask that you please provide your comments at the public meetings, or you are invited to respond in writing or by electronic mail.

In Writing:

Calvin Hite, Superintendent
New River Gorge National River
P.O. Box 246
Glen Jean, WV 25846

By Email: Direct your web browser to:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov> Under the "Choose a Park" drop-down window, find New River Gorge National River, and then click "Go".



GMP Step	Timeframe	Planning Activity	How You Can Be Involved
1	Summer 2005	Initiate GMP: Assemble and gather background information, customize planning process, and establish contacts with participants	
2 We Are Here	Fall 2005 - Winter 2006	Define GMP Planning Context and Foundation and Planning Issues and Project Scoping: Affirm the park's purpose, significance, interpretive themes, and fundamental and other important resources and values; identify issues and concerns	Review Newsletter 1 Participate in public open houses Send us your ideas and comments
3	Winter - Spring 2006	Develop and Evaluate GMP: With NPS staff and public input identify a range of reasonable alternatives for the park's future; assess the effects of alternatives; select a preferred alternative	Review Newsletters 2 and 3 Participate in public open houses Send us your ideas and comments
4	Summer - Fall 2006	Prepare and Publish Draft Plans: Prepare and publish draft documents that describe the alternatives and impacts of implementing each; based on impacts and public input, a preferred alternative is identified in the draft GMP and draft Implementation Plan	Review draft GMP and Implementation Plan Participate in public open houses Send us your ideas and comments
5	Winter 2007	Revise and Publish Final Plans: Analyze public comments; prepare responses to comments; revise and publish final GMP; distribute to public; prepare and issue Record of Decision (for GMP) and Finding of No Significant Impact (for Nuttallburg Implementation Plan)	Review Final GMP and Implementation Plan, including NPS responses to substantive public comments and official letters
6	2007 and beyond	Implement the Approved Plans: As funding allows, implement the GMP and the Implementation Plan	Work with the park to implement the GMP and the Nuttallburg Implementation Plan, as funding allows